

## Community Health Plan

# Cholesterol and Heart Disease

Scientific research has shown that people with high levels of cholesterol in their blood may be at greater risk for having a stroke and/or a heart attack. The following information can help you control your cholesterol and improve your health.

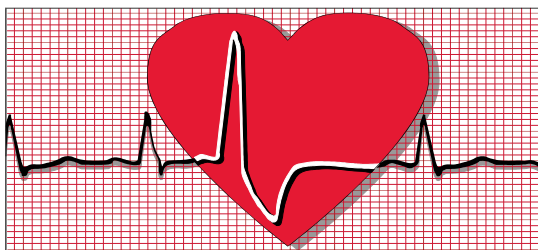
### What is cholesterol?

- ( Cholesterol is a fatty substance found in all foods of animal origin.
- ( Foods of plant origin contain no cholesterol.
- ( Your body uses cholesterol to make essential body substances such as cell walls and hormones.
- ( Even if you did not eat any cholesterol, your liver would make enough for your body's needs.
- ( Too much cholesterol is harmful.
- ( A high cholesterol level means that you have more cholesterol in your bloodstream than your body needs.
- ( The higher your blood cholesterol level, the greater your risk or chance of developing coronary heart disease.

### Risk factors for heart disease

*Risk factors you cannot control include:*

- ( Family history of early heart disease
- ( Being 45 years or older for men and 55 years or older for women
- ( Being male



*Risk factors you can control include:*

- ( Cigarette smoking
- ( High blood cholesterol
- ( High blood pressure
- ( Diabetes
- ( Obesity
- ( Lack of exercise



### Are you at risk?

- ( Ideally, your cholesterol level should be under 200 mg/dl.
- ( If your cholesterol is over 240 mg/dl-- and/or you also have other risk factors for heart disease--we recommend that you speak to your doctor for medical counseling and treatment to reduce your risk.

### What can you do to be on your way to a healthy heart?

- ( Reduce the amount of saturated fat and cholesterol in your diet (e.g., whole milk, egg, butter, fatty meats).
- ( Eat food low in cholesterol and saturated fat (e.g., fruits, vegetables, and fiber).
- ( If you are overweight lose weight.
- ( Become more physically active/exercise.
- ( Know your cholesterol level, blood pressure, and other heart disease risk factors.
- ( Talk to your doctor about your heart's health.



This newsletter should not be considered specific medical advice, as each circumstance is different. If you need medical advice, talk to your doctor and do not rely on knowledge gained from this information. Community Health Plan/Health Education and Promotion Unit, 07/98.

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